

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **\$207 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING RESTORED TO NEW YORK'S HIGHWAY BUDGET**

#### *FUNDING CRUCIAL TO I-86 UPGRADE*

OWEGO - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today met with the I-86 Statewide Coalition and informed the membership that a supplemental spending bill has increased New York's federal highway allocation by \$207 million for fiscal year 2003. The funding is crucial to the completion of the upgrade of Route 17 to Interstate 86.

"Upgrading Route 17 to I-86 will greatly improve transportation across the state and provide a needed economic boost to the region by promoting the growth of business, industry and tourism," said Hinchey. "The upgrade of I-86 will pay dividends far exceeding the costs, and the sooner the upgrades are completed and the designation is made, the greater the financial benefits to the state and region."

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) provides \$8.196 billion in "guaranteed" federal highway aid to the State of New York over six years, a 37 percent increase over the levels provided under the previous highway funding law. Of that, \$20.7 million was secured specifically for upgrades to future I-86. Hinchey secured \$17.1 million of that amount for the portion of the highway in the 26th Congressional District. In addition to the guaranteed amount, New York receives funds from the Highway Trust Fund. In the fiscal years 2000 and 2001, New York received at least an additional \$236 million from the trust fund, which is funded by gas taxes.

TEA-21 authorizes \$27.7 billion in highway spending for fiscal year 2003. However, the Bush Administration requested only \$23.3 billion in its budget proposal, automatically reducing the amount based on lower than expected gas tax receipts. Hinchey, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, cosponsored legislation that was incorporated into a larger spending bill that restores the \$4.4 billion cut without forcing cuts in other priorities like homeland security, veterans' benefits and special education. The final version of the bill will be written by a House-Senate conference committee, but since both the House and Senate versions contain the funding, its inclusion is virtually guaranteed.

New York's share of the \$4.4 billion increase is \$206,941,580, bringing its total federal highway allocation for FY 2003 to \$1,271,924,497.